



[4910-13-P]

**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

**Federal Aviation Administration**

**14 CFR Part 39**

**[Docket No. FAA-2018-0455; Product Identifier 2017-NM-121-AD]**

**RIN 2120-AA64**

**Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Airplanes**

**AGENCY:** Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), DOT.

**ACTION:** Notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM).

**SUMMARY:** We propose to supersede Airworthiness Directive (AD) 98-18-24, which applies to certain Airbus Model A320 series airplanes. AD 98-18-24 requires repetitive inspections to detect cracking in the inner flange of a certain door frame, and corrective actions, if necessary. AD 98-18-24 also provides an optional terminating action for the repetitive inspections. Since we issued AD 98-18-24, it has been determined that the compliance times for the repetitive inspections must be reduced. This proposed AD would continue to require the repetitive inspections of the inner flange of a certain door frame, with reduced repetitive inspection intervals, and corrective action if necessary. We are proposing this AD to address the unsafe condition on these products.

**DATES:** We must receive comments on this proposed AD by [INSERT DATE 45 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

**ADDRESSES:** You may send comments, using the procedures found in 14 CFR 11.43 and 11.45, by any of the following methods:

- Federal eRulemaking Portal: Go to <http://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the instructions for submitting comments.

- Fax: 202-493-2251.

- Mail: U.S. Department of Transportation, Docket Operations, M-30, West Building Ground Floor, Room W12-140, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE., Washington, DC 20590.

- Hand Delivery: Deliver to Mail address above between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

For service information identified in this NPRM, contact Airbus, Airworthiness Office – EIAS, 1 Rond Point Maurice Bellonte, 31707 Blagnac Cedex, France; telephone +33 5 61 93 36 96; fax +33 5 61 93 44 51; email [account.airworth-eas@airbus.com](mailto:account.airworth-eas@airbus.com); Internet <http://www.airbus.com>. You may view this referenced service information at the FAA, Transport Standards Branch, 2200 South 216th St., Des Moines, WA. For information on the availability of this material at the FAA, call 206-231-3195.

### **Examining the AD Docket**

You may examine the AD docket on the Internet at <http://www.regulations.gov> by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2018-0455; or in person at the Docket Management Facility between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. The AD docket contains this proposed AD, the regulatory evaluation, any comments received, and other information. The street address for the Docket Operations office (telephone 800-647-5527) is in the ADDRESSES section. Comments will be available in the AD docket shortly after receipt.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Sanjay Ralhan, Aerospace Engineer,  
International Section, Transport Standards Branch, FAA; 2200 South 216th St.,  
Des Moines, WA 98198; telephone and fax 206-231-3223.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

**Comments Invited**

We invite you to send any written relevant data, views, or arguments about this proposal. Send your comments to an address listed under the ADDRESSES section. Include “Docket No. FAA-2018-0455; Product Identifier 2017-NM-121-AD” at the beginning of your comments. We specifically invite comments on the overall regulatory, economic, environmental, and energy aspects of this proposed AD. We will consider all comments received by the closing date and may amend this proposed AD based on those comments.

We will post all comments we receive, without change, to <http://www.regulations.gov>, including any personal information you provide. We will also post a report summarizing each substantive verbal contact we receive about this proposed AD.

**Discussion**

We issued AD 98-18-24, Amendment 39-10740 (63 FR 49272, September 15, 1998) (“AD 98-18-24”), for certain A320 series airplanes. AD 98-18-24 was prompted by the results of a fatigue test on simulated flights which revealed cracks on the inner flange of door frame 66 at stringers 18 and 20. The cracks were located in the gusset plate attachment holes and were hidden by the gusset plates. AD 98-18-24 requires repetitive

inspections to detect cracking in the inner flange of door frame 66, and corrective actions if necessary. AD 98-18-24 also provides an optional terminating action for the repetitive inspections. We issued AD 98-18-24 to detect and correct fatigue cracking in the inner flange of door frame 66, which could result in reduced structural integrity of the airplane.

Since we issued AD 98-18-24, based on the results from a full scale fatigue test, it has been determined that the repetitive inspection intervals must be reduced.

The European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA), which is the Technical Agent for the Member States of the European Union, has issued EASA Airworthiness Directive 2017-0128, dated July 24, 2017 (referred to after this as the Mandatory Continuing Airworthiness Information, or “the MCAI”), to correct an unsafe condition for certain Airbus Model A320-211 and A320-231 airplanes. The MCAI states:

During fatigue test on simulated flights, cracks developed on the inner flange of door frame 66 at stringer 18 and 20 positions. These cracks were located in the gusset plate attachment holes and were hidden by the plates.

This condition, if not detected and corrected, could affect the structural integrity of the fuselage.

To address this potential unsafe condition, Airbus issued Service Bulletin (SB) A320-53-1071, later revised, to provide instructions to inspect and repair the gusset plate attachment holes at frame 66, at stringers 18, 20 and 22 both left hand (LH) and right hand (RH) side of the fuselage (hereafter collectively referred to as “the attachment holes” in this [EASA] AD), and [Airbus] SB A320-53-1072, providing instructions for reworking of the attachment holes.

Consequently, DGAC France issued [French] AD 1996-234-087, later revised [which corresponds to FAA AD 98-18-24], requiring repetitive inspections and, depending on findings, repair of the attachment holes, and including reference to a reworking procedure, which constitutes optional terminating action for the repetitive inspections of the attachment holes.

Since that [French] AD was issued, based on results from a full scale fatigue test, it was determined that the inspection intervals must be reduced. Airbus issued SB A320-53-1071 Revision 03, modifying the inspection threshold and intervals, and not changing the inspection instructions.

For the reason described above, this [EASA] AD retains the requirement of DGAC France AD 1996-234-087 R1, which is superseded, and requires reduction of the repetitive inspection interval.

You may examine the MCAI in the AD docket on the Internet at <http://www.regulations.gov> by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2018-0455.

#### **Related Service Information under 1 CFR part 51**

Airbus has issued Service Bulletin A320-53-1071, Revision 03, dated July 20, 2017. This service information describes procedures for detailed inspections of the gusset plate attachment holes at door frame 66 for cracking and corrective action.

Airbus also issued Service Bulletin A320-53-1072, Revision 02, dated May 5, 2016. This service information describes procedures for modification of the gusset frame attachment at door frame 66.

This service information is reasonably available because the interested parties have access to it through their normal course of business or by the means identified in the ADDRESSES section.

## **FAA's Determination and Requirements of this Proposed AD**

This product has been approved by the aviation authority of another country, and is approved for operation in the United States. Pursuant to our bilateral agreement with the State of Design Authority, we have been notified of the unsafe condition described in the MCAI and service information referenced above. We are proposing this AD because we evaluated all pertinent information and determined an unsafe condition exists and is likely to exist or develop on other products of the same type design.

### **Costs of Compliance**

We estimate that this proposed AD affects 3 airplanes of U.S. registry.

The actions required by AD 98-18-24, and retained in this proposed AD take about 8 work-hours per product, at an average labor rate of \$85 per work-hour. Based on these figures, the estimated cost of the actions that are required by AD 98-18-24 is \$680 per product.

We estimate that it would take about 19 work-hours per product to comply with the basic requirements of this proposed AD. The average labor rate is \$85 per work-hour. Based on these figures, we estimate the cost of this proposed AD on U.S. operators to be \$4,845, or \$1,615 per product.

We have received no definitive data that would enable us to provide cost estimates for the on-condition actions specified in this proposed AD.

In addition, we estimate that the optional terminating action would take about 20 work-hours per product, at an average labor rate of \$85 per work-hour. Required parts

costs would be about \$60. Based on these figures, the estimated cost of the optional terminating action would be \$1,760 per product.

We also estimate that it would take about 1 work-hour per product to comply with the proposed reporting requirement in this proposed AD. The average labor rate is \$85 per hour. Based on these figures, we estimate the cost of reporting the inspection results on U.S. operators to be \$255, or \$85 per product.

### **Paperwork Reduction Act**

A federal agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, nor shall a person be subject to penalty for failure to comply with a collection of information subject to the requirements of the Paperwork Reduction Act unless that collection of information displays a current valid OMB control number. The control number for the collection of information required by this AD is 2120-0056. The paperwork cost associated with this AD has been detailed in the Costs of Compliance section of this document and includes time for reviewing instructions, as well as completing and reviewing the collection of information. Therefore, all reporting associated with this AD is mandatory. Comments concerning the accuracy of this burden and suggestions for reducing the burden should be directed to the FAA at 800 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20591, ATTN: Information Collection Clearance Officer, AES-200.

### **Authority for this Rulemaking**

Title 49 of the United States Code specifies the FAA's authority to issue rules on aviation safety. Subtitle I, section 106, describes the authority of the FAA Administrator.

“Subtitle VII: Aviation Programs,” describes in more detail the scope of the Agency’s authority.

We are issuing this rulemaking under the authority described in “Subtitle VII, Part A, Subpart III, Section 44701: General requirements.” Under that section, Congress charges the FAA with promoting safe flight of civil aircraft in air commerce by prescribing regulations for practices, methods, and procedures the Administrator finds necessary for safety in air commerce. This regulation is within the scope of that authority because it addresses an unsafe condition that is likely to exist or develop on products identified in this rulemaking action.

This AD is issued in accordance with authority delegated by the Executive Director, Aircraft Certification Service, as authorized by FAA Order 8000.51C. In accordance with that order, issuance of ADs is normally a function of the Compliance and Airworthiness Division, but during this transition period, the Executive Director has delegated the authority to issue ADs applicable to transport category airplanes to the Director of the System Oversight Division.

### **Regulatory Findings**

We determined that this proposed AD would not have federalism implications under Executive Order 13132. This proposed AD would not have a substantial direct effect on the States, on the relationship between the national Government and the States, or on the distribution of power and responsibilities among the various levels of government.

For the reasons discussed above, I certify this proposed regulation:



1. Is not a “significant regulatory action” under Executive Order 12866;
2. Is not a “significant rule” under the DOT Regulatory Policies and Procedures (44 FR 11034, February 26, 1979);
3. Will not affect intrastate aviation in Alaska; and
4. Will not have a significant economic impact, positive or negative, on a substantial number of small entities under the criteria of the Regulatory Flexibility Act.

#### **List of Subjects in 14 CFR Part 39**

Air transportation, Aircraft, Aviation safety, Incorporation by reference, Safety.

#### **The Proposed Amendment**

Accordingly, under the authority delegated to me by the Administrator, the FAA proposes to amend 14 CFR part 39 as follows:

#### **PART 39 - AIRWORTHINESS DIRECTIVES**

1. The authority citation for part 39 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 49 U.S.C. 106(g), 40113, 44701.

#### **§ 39.13 [Amended]**

2. The FAA amends § 39.13 by removing Airworthiness Directive (AD) 98-18-24 Amendment 39-10740 (63 FR 49272, September 15, 1998), and adding the following new AD:

**Airbus:** Docket No. FAA-2018-0455; Product Identifier 2017-NM-121-AD.

#### **(a) Comments Due Date**

We must receive comments by [INSERT DATE 45 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

**(b) Affected ADs**

This AD replaces AD 98-18-24 Amendment 39-10740 (63 FR 49272, September 15, 1998) (“AD 98-18-24”).

**(c) Applicability**

This AD applies to Airbus Model A320-211 and Model A320-231 airplanes, certificated in any category, serial numbers 0029, 0045, 0046, 0049 through 0057 inclusive, 0059, 0064, and 0065.

**(d) Subject**

Air Transport Association (ATA) of America Code 53, Fuselage.

**(e) Reason**

This AD was prompted by a report of cracks on the inner flange of door frame 66 at stringer 18 and 20 positions and by the results of a full scale fatigue test that indicated the intervals for the repetitive inspections required by AD 98-18-24 must be reduced. We are issuing this AD to detect and correct fatigue cracking in the inner flange of door frame 66, which could result in reduced structural integrity of the airplane.

**(f) Compliance**

Comply with this AD within the compliance times specified, unless already done.

**(g) Retained Eddy Current Inspection, with No Changes**

This paragraph restates the requirements of paragraph (a) of AD 98-18-24, with no changes. For Model A320 series airplanes on which Airbus Modification 21778 (reference Airbus Service Bulletin A320-53-1072, dated November 7, 1995, as revised by Change Notice 0A, dated July 5, 1996) has not been accomplished: Prior to the

accumulation of 20,000 total flight cycles, or within 1 year after October 20, 1998 (the effective date of AD 98-18-24), whichever occurs later: Perform a rotating probe eddy current inspection to detect cracking around the edges of the gusset plate attachment holes of the inner flange of door frame 66, left and right, at stringer positions P18, P20, and P22, in accordance with Airbus Service Bulletin A320-53-1071, dated November 7, 1995, as revised by Change Notice 0A, dated July 5, 1996. If any crack is detected, prior to further flight, repair in accordance with a method approved by the Manager, International Section, Transport Standards Branch, FAA. Repeat the inspection thereafter at intervals not to exceed 20,000 flight cycles.

**(h) Retained Optional Terminating Action, with No Changes**

This paragraph restates the optional terminating action of paragraph (b) of AD 98-18-24, with no changes. Modification of the gusset plate attachment holes of the inner flange of door frame 66, left and right (Airbus Modification 21778), in accordance with Airbus Service Bulletin A320-53-1072, dated November 7, 1995, as revised by Change Notice 0A, dated July 5, 1996, constitutes terminating action for the repetitive inspection requirements of paragraph (g) of this AD.

**(i) New Requirement of this AD: Repetitive Inspections**

At the applicable compliance time specified in figure 1 to paragraph (i) of this AD, do a rotating probe eddy current inspection to detect cracking around the edges of the gusset plate attachment holes of the inner flange of door frame 66, left and right, in accordance with the Accomplishment Instructions of Airbus Service Bulletin

A320-53-1071, Revision 03, dated July 20, 2017. Repeat the inspection thereafter at intervals not to exceed 10,900 flight cycles.

**Figure 1 to paragraph (i) of this AD – Initial Compliance Times**

<b>Airplane Condition</b>  (Number of rotating probe eddy current inspections completed prior to the effective date of this AD using Airbus Service Bulletin A320-53-1071.)	<b>Initial Compliance Time</b>
None	Before exceeding 39,000 flight cycles since the airplane's first flight.
One rotating probe eddy current inspection completed	Before exceeding 39,000 flight cycles since the airplane's first flight, or within 1,500 flight cycles after the effective date of this AD, whichever occurs later, but before exceeding 20,000 flight cycles since completion of the first rotating probe eddy current inspection
Two rotating probe eddy current inspections completed	Within 10,900 flight cycles since completion of the most recent rotating probe eddy current inspection, or before exceeding 49,900 flight cycles, whichever occurs first; or within 30 days after the effective date of this AD; whichever occurs later.

**(j) Corrective Actions**

(1) If, during any inspection required by paragraph (i) of this AD, any crack is found on a gusset plate attachment hole: Before further flight, repair the affected attachment hole, in accordance with the Accomplishment Instructions of Airbus Service Bulletin A320-53-1071, Revision 03, dated July 20, 2017, except as required by paragraph (n) of this AD.

(2) If, during any inspection required by paragraph (i) of this AD, any crack is found on any other hole of the gusset plate: Before further flight, contact the Manager, International Section, Transport Standards Branch, FAA; or the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA); or Airbus's EASA Design Organization Approval (DOA); for approved repair instructions and accomplish those instructions accordingly. If approved by the DOA, the approval must include the DOA-authorized signature.

**(k) Terminating Action for this AD**

(1) Repair of an attachment hole area as required by paragraph (j)(1) of this AD terminates the repetitive inspections required by paragraph (i) of this AD for that attachment hole area on that airplane only.

(2) Repair of any other hole of the gusset plate, as required by paragraph (j)(2) of this AD, does not terminate the repetitive inspections required by paragraph (i) of this AD for that airplane, unless specified otherwise in the repair instructions provided by the Manager, International Section, Transport Standards Branch, FAA; or the EASA; or Airbus's EASA DOA.

(3) Accomplishing the initial inspection required by paragraph (i) of this AD terminates the inspections required by paragraph (g) of this AD.

**(l) Optional Modification**

Modification of the gusset plate attachment holes of the inner flange of door frame 66, left and right, in accordance with the Accomplishment Instructions of Airbus Service Bulletin A320-53-1072, Revision 02, dated May 5, 2016, terminates the repetitive inspections required by paragraph (i) of this AD for that airplane.

**(m) Reporting**

Report the results of the inspection required by paragraph (i) of this AD that are done on or after the effective date of this AD to Airbus Service Bulletin Reporting Online Application on Airbus World (<https://w3.airbus.com/>), or submit the results to Airbus in accordance with the instructions of Airbus Service Bulletin A320-53-1071, Revision 03, dated July 20, 2017. Submit the report within 30 days after accomplishing the inspection required by paragraph (i) of this AD. The report must include the inspection results, a description of any discrepancies found, the airplane serial number, and the number of landings and flight hours on the airplane. If operators have reported findings as part of obtaining any corrective actions approved by the EASA DOA, operators are not required to report those findings as specified in this paragraph.

**(n) Service Information Exception**

Where Airbus Service Bulletin A320-53-1071, Revision 03, dated July 20, 2017, specifies to contact Airbus for appropriate action, and specifies that action as “RC” (Required for Compliance): Before further flight, accomplish corrective actions in accordance with the procedures specified in paragraph (q)(2) of this AD.

**(o) Credit for Previous Actions**

(1) This paragraph provides credit for actions required by paragraph (i) of this AD, if those actions were performed before the effective date of this AD using Airbus Service Bulletin A320-53-1071, Revision 01, dated July 4, 2002; or Airbus Service Bulletin A320-53-1071, Revision 02, dated May 5, 2016.

(2) This paragraph provides credit for actions identified in paragraph (l) of this AD, if those actions were performed before the effective date of this AD using Airbus Service Bulletin A320-53-1072, dated November 7, 1995, as revised by Change Notice 0A, dated July 5, 1996; or Airbus Service Bulletin A320-53-1072, Revision 01, dated July 4, 2002.

**(p) Paperwork Reduction Act Burden Statement**

A federal agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, nor shall a person be subject to a penalty for failure to comply with a collection of information subject to the requirements of the Paperwork Reduction Act unless that collection of information displays a current valid OMB Control Number. The OMB Control Number for this information collection is 2120-0056. Public reporting for this collection of information is estimated to be approximately 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, completing and reviewing the collection of information. All responses to this collection of information are mandatory. Comments concerning the accuracy of this burden and suggestions for reducing the burden should be directed to the FAA at: 800 Independence Ave. SW, Washington, DC 20591, Attn: Information Collection Clearance Officer, AES-200.

**(q) Other FAA AD Provisions**

**(1) Alternative Methods of Compliance (AMOCs):** The Manager, International Section, Transport Standards Branch, FAA, has the authority to approve AMOCs for this AD, if requested using the procedures found in 14 CFR 39.19. In accordance with 14 CFR 39.19, send your request to your principal inspector or local Flight Standards

District Office, as appropriate. If sending information directly to the International Section, send it to the attention of the person identified in paragraph (r)(2) of this AD. Information may be emailed to: 9-ANM-116-AMOC-REQUESTS@faa.gov.

(i) Before using any approved AMOC, notify your appropriate principal inspector, or lacking a principal inspector, the manager of the local flight standards district office/certificate holding district office.

(ii) AMOCs approved previously for AD 98-18-24 are approved as AMOCs for the corresponding provisions of this AD.

**(2) Contacting the Manufacturer:** As of the effective date of this AD, for any requirement in this AD to obtain corrective actions from a manufacturer, the action must be accomplished using a method approved by the Manager, International Section, Transport Standards Branch, FAA; or the EASA; or Airbus's EASA DOA. If approved by the DOA, the approval must include the DOA-authorized signature.

**(3) Required for Compliance (RC):** Except as required by paragraph (n) of this AD: If any service information contains procedures or tests that are identified as RC, those procedures and tests must be done to comply with this AD; any procedures or tests that are not identified as RC are recommended. Those procedures and tests that are not identified as RC may be deviated from using accepted methods in accordance with the operator's maintenance or inspection program without obtaining approval of an AMOC, provided the procedures and tests identified as RC can be done and the airplane can be put back in an airworthy condition. Any substitutions or changes to procedures or tests identified as RC require approval of an AMOC.



**(r) Related Information**

(1) Refer to Mandatory Continuing Airworthiness Information (MCAI) EASA AD 2017-0128, dated July 24, 2017, for related information. This MCAI may be found in the AD docket on the Internet at <http://www.regulations.gov> by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2018-0455.

(2) For more information about this AD, contact Sanjay Ralhan, Aerospace Engineer, International Section, Transport Standards Branch, FAA; 2200 South 216th St., Des Moines, WA 98198; telephone and fax 206-231-3223.

(3) For service information identified in this AD, contact Airbus, Airworthiness Office – EIAS, 1 Rond Point Maurice Bellonte, 31707 Blagnac Cedex, France; telephone +33 5 61 93 36 96; fax +33 5 61 93 44 51; email [account.airworth-eas@airbus.com](mailto:account.airworth-eas@airbus.com); Internet <http://www.airbus.com>. You may view this service information at the FAA, Transport Standards Branch, 2200 South 216th St., Des Moines, WA. For information on the availability of this material at the FAA, call 206-231-3195.

Issued in Des Moines, Washington, on May 21, 2018.

James Cashdollar,  
Acting Director,  
System Oversight Division,  
Aircraft Certification Service.

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